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News briefly

Army Hawaii Women's Volleyball Teams Wanted

Schofield Barracks, Helemano, WAAF, TAMC and Fort Shafter Active duty female Soldiers and wives of active duty Soldiers Army (battalion level) within the geographical limits of Hawaii are allowed to enter one team. All entries must be received by the USAG-HI Sports Office, building 556, Stop 112, Schofield Barracks, before close of business this Monday. First meeting will be at 1:30 p.m., Oct. 25 at the Ka'ala Recreation Center, building 556, Schofield Barracks. For more information call U.S. Army Garrison, Hawaii Sports Office at 655-0856 or 655-0101 Send e-mail to irvineba@schofield.army.mil.

Hale Kula Elementary School Community Meeting

This Wednesday in the Hale Kula Elementary School cafeteria from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. All military families are invited to attend the meeting to discuss the school goals and vision and to examine the data of the school's student achievements. Call Wayne Yoshino, Army school liaison officer at 655-2414 for information.

Fall Festival

A Fall Festival will be held at Hale Kula Elementary School, Schofield Barracks Oct. 23 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., rain or shine. This family activity will include games, prizes, food, entertainment, silent auction, static displays and much more. Vendors, crafters, and FRGs wanted, booth price is \$20. Contact Andrea at 624-1110 for information.

Hui O' Na Wahine Luncheon

The Hui O' Na Wahine of Schofield Barracks will hold its monthly luncheon on Thursday, Oct. 21, at the Nehelani. Cost is \$12. October is Breast Cancer Awareness month, so join us as we learn more about the disease. The guest speaker, Maj. Lomax, is the deputy director of the Obstetrician and Gynecology specialty course at Tripler Army Medical Center. She will provide attendees with up-to-date information about breast cancer. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m., and lunch is at 11 a.m. If interested in becoming a vendor call Amy Snyder at 624-4989. For reservations call Judi Rossi at 778-3704. Limited on site child care will be provided. Call central registration at 655-3929 or 655-5314 to make a reservation.

Afghan elections 'a huge success'



A Joint Electoral Management Body employee, right, explains how to fill out an election ballot to an Afghan woman in the village of Charikar during Afghanistan's first democratic presidential election October 9th.

Video still by Pfc. Mary Simms

By Master Sgt.
Terry Anderson
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – It was an historic day for the people of Afghanistan by any measure, but for Madame Gul of the village of Raban, it was much more than just historic; it was a life-changing event.

"The Taliban burned my house, they kicked us out of (Raban)," Gul said. "Now I have freedom. I'm standing in front of you and voting. Of course my life has been changed."

Madame Gul and millions like her got their first taste of democracy in Afghanistan's first-ever direct presidential elections Oct. 9. The desire to vote was so strong that Afghans in the Panjao district began to line up four hours before the polling center was scheduled to open – with a foot of snow on the ground. Despite the weather and threats of spectacular attacks by insurgents, voter turnout was extremely high.

"A week ago I would have said our primary concern would have been attacks on the election process itself," said Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, commander of Combined Joint Task Force 76 at Bagram Air Field.

See "Election" Page A-5

Wolfhounds conduct largest 2nd BCT air assault mission

Spc. Sean Kimmons
25th ID (L) Public Affairs

HEGNEH, Iraq – Roughly 200 Task Force 1-27 Infantry Soldiers on eight UH-60 Blackhawk and three CH-47 Chinook helicopters carried out the largest air assault mission 2nd Brigade Combat Team has ever conducted in Iraq on Oct. 5.

The air assault was the first action in TF 1-27 Inf's battalion-sized military operation dubbed Operation Wolfhound Fury. The idea behind the large-scale air assault was to conduct a movement of troops without alerting Anti-Iraqi Forces within their two objectives.

In past operations, enemy lookouts have alerted AIF leaders of approaching U.S. military convoys, giving them ample time to flee.

AH-64 Apache helicopters from 1st Infantry Division traveled along with the other helicopters for extra protection and to ensure no terrorists fled when troops landed at their objectives. They then hovered around troop positions to provide overhead security and surveillance.

The main objective of Wolfhound Fury was Hegneh, a farming town lining the Tigris River that TF 1-27 INF has never operated in before. Prior to the operation, TF 1-27 INF received intelligence that Hegneh was a safe

haven for terrorist activity.

"Today's mission was planned based on recent intelligence tips that Anti-Iraqi Forces were operating in the Hegneh region," said 2nd Lt. Chris Trombetta, a platoon leader with Company A, TF 1-27 INF. "The plan was to search every single structure to identify all male inhabitants and also to look for contraband."

The Hegneh objective, similar to the secondary objective in Zab consisted of a two-tier strategy where the main body arrived via air assault and a significant following force arrived via convoy with additional supplies to sustain the battalion, Trombetta said.

Before ground forces arrived at Hegneh, troops took up cordon positions and set up traffic control points to eliminate anyone from entering or leaving the town. Also, Apache helicopters prevented a suspected terrorist from fleeing when he tried to swim across the Tigris River under the moonlight.

Once the ground convoys entered the objective areas, air assaulted troops jumped in the vehicles to commence the clearance of both objectives.

"In Zab, the focus was on a couple of specific buildings, where AIF leaders were known to reside," said Capt. Victor Olshansky, assistant S-3 for TF 1-27 INF. "In

Hegneh, which is much smaller, we actually cordon and searched the entire town as part of gathering additional information and confirming the information we had on terrorist activities there."

Throughout the 14-hour mission in Hegneh, troops searched more than 50 structures and gathered information on most of its male residents.

Pfc. Michael Hammer, a radio transmission operator for Co. A, TF 1-27 INF, helped record personal data for his platoon.

"We're not looking to keep a record on the general public," Hammer said. "We're looking to find people who are repeatedly committing terrorist acts."

The personal data and photo of the males and their vehicles will help TF 1-27 INF gain intelligence toward suspected terrorists in the area, Hammer said.

In fact, it has already become helpful to TF 1-27 INF and the local Iraqi Security Forces.

"The operation has let us refine some of our key targets that we can address through a combination of Iraqi civic engagement and the use of the Iraqi Security Forces," said Olshansky.

Hammer said this operation was more in-depth on

See "Wolfhounds" Page A-5



Spc. Sean Kimmons

Spc. Robert Chapman, a team leader with Co. A, TF 1-27 INF, apprehends a suspected terrorist as Spc. Rodriguez Cruell, an infantryman also with Co. A, provides security during Operation Wolfhound Fury.

25th ID (L) overwhelmingly exceeds retention goals

Spc. Francis Horton
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan – The 25th Infantry Division (Light) has been deployed to Afghanistan for more than six months and to Iraq for more than nine months now.

Although Soldiers are under constant threat every day, it hasn't stopped their "hooah" attitude about staying Army.

"We have well exceeded retention rates of the '04 fiscal year," said Sgt. Maj. Elisabeth Jones, the CJTF-76 command career counselor.

With the 25th ID (L)

spread across the world in two war zones and with Soldiers still in Hawaii, some might be worried about retention rates, but as Jones says, there are many incentives for troops to continue their careers.

First, there is a tax-exempt bonus, Jones said. Soldiers can receive up to \$10,000 no matter their military job.

But it isn't always all about the money.

"Soldiers can reenlist for the Stryker Brigade," Jones said. Stryker, along with the 3rd Brigade, are two brigades being added to the ranks of the 25th ID (L), which offer

Soldiers a new alternative in Hawaii.

"Stryker and 3rd Brigade will stabilize Soldiers," Jones said. "It's a three year commitment to stay in Hawaii."

And indeed, many Soldiers have reenlisted for the self-sufficient additions to the 25th ID (L). Soldiers stationed in either brigade stay in Hawaii for three years. The first two years are spent training and preparing for a possible deployment sometime during the third year.

The advantage of these units of action is that they act as a single deploying unit that doesn't need to pick Soldiers out of other units.

According to Jones, leaders play an important role in keeping Soldiers in the Army.

"Retention rates are very high because of effective leadership and support at home from the families," Jones said. "That we've been successful in a deployed situation speaks a lot about the leadership."

Jones added that retention non-commissioned officers and the overall retention team are vital to the process as well.

"Career counselors are instrumental in the retention process because they are advisors to the commander

and command sergeant major, as well as a catalyst to the entire reenlistment process," Jones said.

"They interview and counsel Soldiers on reenlistment options available, and also secure the retention desires of the Soldier. It is a team effort that takes place at all levels, that's why we are successful."

But when it all comes down to it, Jones said, Soldiers admit that patriotism plays a big part in their decision to re-up.

"They are wanting to be a part of a cause bigger than themselves," Jones said with a smile.

We want to hear from you

The Hawaii Army Weekly welcomes letters and commentaries from readers. To submit call the editor at 655-4816 or e-mail editor@hawaiiarmyweekly.com. The deadline for articles is the Friday prior to the week of publication. Send all articles in Microsoft Word or text format.

OPINION & COMMENTARY

A journalists' account: Afghans voted despite hazards

Commentary

Pfc. Mary Simms
CJTF-76 Public Affairs



Courtesy photo

Pfc. Mary Simms stands in line with a row of Afghan women who are waiting for their opportunity to vote in the historical election Oct. 9.

when you know that improvised explosive devices on the road cause most deaths and serious injuries. So, while I was afraid I would get "blown up," I was willing to risk it for this monumental day in history.

I interviewed so many people at the polls today who hope democracy will make their lives better. The hope here is amazing. You meet these people who have literally nothing and yet they still have hope for a better future. I think that's because so much has changed for them during the last three years.

When I arrived at the first polling site I was appalled because I didn't see women anywhere. With 40 percent of the 10 million Afghans registered to vote being women, how could there not be any women at the polls?

I found out the men and women are segregated, so the women were voting at another location. I was disappointed because I wanted to focus my story on how much life in Afghanistan has improved for women and how the opportunity to vote is so empowering.

We were able to arrange to visit the women's voting site, but of the six vehicles full of people, only Maj. Stacy Bathrick, CJTF-76 public affairs officer, and I were allowed to go inside. The

only man allowed in with us was the interpreter. He was allowed inside only long enough for me to videotape my interviews.

It was such an amazing experience to go to a polling site completely run by women. Although it is no longer law that represses them, it will take time for the culture to change after years of harsh rule under the mujahadeen and the Taliban.

I interviewed a woman on camera and was astounded at how outspoken she was. She was wearing a burqa that covered her from head to toe, but it didn't matter.

This woman impressed and inspired me. She yelled into the microphone and flung her arms fervently as she answered questions. She was so full of life and opinions and is finally free to express them. The Taliban had burned her house and her life was horrible while they were in power.

She said she had brought both of her 18-year-old daughters with her and her husband was at the male polling site with her boys. She told me that she hated guns and war and wanted peace for her people.

After 23 years of war, the people here are very happy to be moving toward resolving problems through democratic politics. The road ahead is still a long one but today was another huge step in making Afghanistan a safe, free and democratic society.



Sharee Moore

Fabiola and Daniel Hurtado De Mendoza, Laura Shinall, Shelby Walton, Margarita Hurtado De Mendoza, Bobby Dela Rosa, Bolivia and David Hurtado De Mendoza make up the Bolivian dance group that performed at the Hispanic Heritage luncheon coordinated by the 25th ID (L) Equal Opportunity office Sept. 23.

What Hispanic Heritage month really means to me

Commentary

Sgt. Ximena Hurtado De Mendoza
HHC, DISCOM

As a military family we had the opportunity to live in Fort Benning, Ga., where the School of the Americas was located. Officers and enlisted personnel from all South America were stationed there. We enjoyed, for four years, their fabulous Hispanic Celebration, which counted with more than 10 countries.

Among them were Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Chile, Colombia, Panama, Uruguay and Paraguay. It was a pleasure for the eyes to see all the dancers in magnificent costumes, their dances, traditions and to taste the food was even better.

Therefore, when we arrived to Hawaii we wanted to keep showing our culture, and for four consecutive years, my family has been participating in every Hispanic celebration. People loved the colorful and elegant costumes and we were invited to dance everywhere. We had the honor to represent our beloved country, Bolivia, at

Schofield Barracks, Fort Shafter, Pearl Harbor, Hickam Air Force and Kapiolani Park. It was not always easy to teach and learn the steps, and to dance with the necessary grace, takes time.

Nevertheless, we do it because we want to share the richness of our folklore, and the beauty of our music. Our children should never forget their roots, if we forget where we came from, how are we going to know where we are going?

That is the reason why all five of my children are so enthusiastic in participating in these activities. Our traditions identify our origin and what we are proud of, that is why we find it important to continue teaching, showing and passing on to our next generation.

We will not forget who we really are.

Our diversity as Hispanics makes a great combination where every culture can put together pieces of their best customs and traditions. All of them create the originality that characterizes us.

Colorful, handmade costumes and the agility and choreography of the dancers expresses the richness of the Bolivian folklore, which is full of legends, symbolism and fantasy. Dance is only one, of many, ways to show the ancestral traditions of the Bolivian culture.

Voices of Lightning

Why should Soldiers support Mothers Against Drunk Driving?



"Anything designed to improve our community is worth supporting."

Sgt. Eugene Sukert
Army Substance Abuse Program NCOIC



"We should support them because they advocate saving lives."

Dr. David Brown
Army Substance Abuse Program



"We should support MADD because it is a reputable organization that helps to combat irresponsible behaviors."

Kesha Diodato
Family Advocacy Licensed Clinical Social Worker



"Too many Soldiers die each year because of drunk drivers, especially around the holidays."

Angel L. Rodriguez
DA Police Officer



"They are a very important organization because they have first hand experience - they know what it is like to lose someone they love. They also offer a very good insight to help law enforcement."

Pfc. Jorge Gonzalez
Military Police 13th MP Detachment



"They are educating younger Soldiers about drinking and being responsible."

Sgt. Daniel Jones
CENPAC DVC NCOIC Schofield Barracks Veterinary Clinic

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Briefs

Commissary Now has Internet Coupons – The Defense Commissary Agency is helping customers increase their savings by making Internet coupon links available under a new section at the links page at www.commissaries.com.

“Although we sell groceries at cost, we are always seeking new resources to help our customers increase their savings,” said Patrick B. Nixon, chief executive officer for DeCA. “As the trend toward Internet coupons grows, this section of our Web site will continue to grow as well.”

Along with top Web sites for military grocery coupons, the new section has a link to a new site that offers a choice of English or Spanish; and for customers who prefer more traditional coupons, another link offers commissary shoppers the opportunity to sign up for coupons by mail.

Time Off For Voting Policy – In accordance with DoD Regulation 1400.25-M, excused absence may be granted to permit an employee to report to work three hours after the polls open or leave work three hours before the polls close, whichever involves less time away from work. For example, if polls are open 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., an employee with duty hours of 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. may report to work at 9:30 a.m. The 30 minutes of excused absence would permit the employee to report to work three hours after the polls open.

Halloween Blood Drive on AMR – Oct. 28, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. the Tripler Army Medical Center blood donor center will be having a Halloween Blood Drive at the AMR Physical Fitness Center. Parents with children are welcome and there will be treats for the children. For more information call Pfc. Curtis or Spc. Restrepo at the Tripler Blood Donor Center at 433-6148, or 433-6195.

PWOC Meeting Location Change – Protestant Women of the Chapel meetings are now held each Tuesday morning at 9 a.m. in the sanctuary of the Schofield Barracks Main Post Chapel. Pre-arranged on-site child care is provided. For child care contact Sonya at 455-4011. For more information about PWOC, contact Effie at 624-8251.

New at Crossroads Coffeehouse – Mark Teves and friends will be in concert at the Crossroads Coffeehouse, Friday, Oct. 22, at 7:45 p.m. at the Ka’ala Recreation Center, Schofield Barracks. Come out and enjoy the sounds of island music. The event is free and open to everyone. For more information call Chaplain Conway at 655-9355.

2005 All Army Sports Application Deadline Dates – Men’s and women’s sports: Bowling Nov. 1; Boxing Nov. 2; Cross-Country Nov. 29; Wrestling Dec. 15; Taekwondo Mar. 5; Triathlon Mar. 11. Men’s sports: Volleyball Mar. 5. Women’s sports: Soccer Feb. 14; Volleyball Mar. 19. Athlete application, DA Form 4762-R January 2001, must be signed by the Soldier’s commander and submitted to the U.S. Army Garrison, Hawaii installation sports director. Applications are available at all Army Hawaii gyms. Obsolete editions are not accepted. The sports office is located in the Ka’ala Recreation Center, building 556, Schofield Barracks. For more information call 655-9914 or 655-0101.

OCS Selection Board – The next D.A. Officer Candidate School Selection Board is scheduled to convene the week of Jan. 24. Soldiers who wish to be considered by this selection board must submit their applications through command channels to Military Personnel Division, D.A. Boards Section, Trailer 14, Room 4, on Ayers Ave, Schofield Barracks Nov. 1-18.

The Installation Structured Interview Panel will convene Dec. 6 to interview qualified applicants. Specific interview dates, times, and location will be provided to each individual applicant. Eligibility criteria and application procedures are outlined in AR 350-51. For more information call Nan Lucero at 655-4511 or Corinne Queja at 655-1845.

Free Packing Materials – spouses and families of military members who are deployed overseas can get free packing materials from the postal service. To take advantage of this service call: 1-800-610-8734 and (press 1 for English and then 3 for an operator) and they will send free boxes, packing materials, tape and mailing labels. These products are to be used to mail care packages to service members. Access this information by going on the Internet: supplies.usps.gov Call the 1-800-610-8734 to receive priority mailing tape. Some of the items available online are: Box 7-12x12x8 , Box 4-7x7x6, 106A - Labels, Form 2976A - Customs Form, Form 2976E - Envelope for Customs Form.

Deployment Survival Night at AMR Chapel – Adults and children are invited to attend the AMR Chapel’s free Deployment Survival Night Meal and Program this Tuesday. Guest speaker, Dee Athey, will talk about active parenting skills. There will be a program for children in kindergarten - 6th grade and the youth group will be meeting for 7th - 12th graders. Schedule for the night: 5:30 p.m. is dinner and classes begin at 6 p.m. All classes end at 7:30 p.m. Make sure children (9 months - 4 years old) are registered for the free STACC Site Child care for the chapel. Call 833-5393 to register.

Parents may use chapel child care during any of its programs and worship services. Call the chapel at 833-8175 for more information and reservations for dinner and child care. Leave a name, phone number, number of adults attending, names and ages of the children.

Honolulu Symphony – All military personnel are invited to save 20 percent when they purchase tickets to Honolulu Symphony shows. For a complete listing of show times and more information on the military discount, go to www.ticketmaster.com/promo/7463.

Annual Spookfest Fundraiser on Wheeler – The annual Spookfest celebration will be held Thursday, Oct. 28, from 6 – 7:30 p.m. at the Armed Services YMCA on Wheeler Army Air Field. This is a friendly fall festival designed for pre-school children. Come in costume and play games, win prizes and make crafts. Snacks and drinks will be available. Plan to join us during this “spooktacular” fundraising event to support the Play Morning Program. There will be an admission charge of less than \$2. Call Dela LaFleur at 624-5645 for more information.

Blood Donations Needed – The Tripler Army Medical Center Blood Donor Center is located on the hospital’s second floor, Oceanside and is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call 433-6148.

The Welfare Committee of the Fort Shafter Hui O Wahine serving Fort Shafter, Tripler, AMR, and Camp Smith is currently accepting requests for financial assistance. In accordance with Hui’s constitution, only requests submitted from charitable, educational or community organizations will be considered. Requests must include the organization’s name, point of contact with phone number, and the amount of funds requested and how they will be utilized.

Giving nature a helping hand



Bob McElroy

Pohakuloa Training Area Natural Resources Chief Sean Gleason pats the earth around his newly-planted Lance-leaf Catchfly as PTA Commander, Lt. Col. Fred Clarke, looks on. Gleason, Clarke and other members of the Natural Resources Branch planted about two dozen of the endangered plants in a protected habitat deep in the training area. According to Kathy Kawakami, a botanist in the Natural Resources Branch, only about 2,000 Lance-leaf Catchfly plants exist in the wild; an estimated 1,000 of those are in PTA.

lized. Deadline for requests is Nov. 1, 2004. Distribution of funds will take place by Nov. 15, 2004. For more information contact Marcella Heilig at 833-1834. Mail requests to Fort Shafter Hui O Wahine, Welfare Committee, c/o Marcella Heilig, Hale Ikena: Building 710, Fort Shafter, HI 96858

Off-post Loaner Furniture Program Discontinued – The Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management discontinued the Army off-post loaner furniture program in Hawaii. The on-post loaner program has not changed. Those who have loaner furniture and live off-post can continue to use the borrowed furnishings until the 90-day period is up or household goods arrive. No new issues of furniture or appliances will be granted for off-post residences. All incoming military are encouraged to bring washers and dryers in their household goods shipment. Contact the DPW Furnishings Section at 655-1131 or Kelli Wilson, community relations specialist, at 275-3122.

Free Money for College – The Maj. Gen. James Ursano Scholarship Fund helps Army families with the costs of post secondary, undergraduate level education, vocational training, and preparation for acceptance by service academies for dependent children. Funds can be used for tuition, fees, books, supplies, and on or off campus housing. Eligibility: Applicants must be dependent children of Army Soldiers on active duty, retired or deceased while on active duty or after retirement. The children of Gray Area Retirees are also eligible. Deadline is March 1.

For more specific information about deadlines and documentation (students may apply online after Nov. 1) visit Army Emergency Relief on the Web at www.aerhq.org. Call (703) 428-0035 or e-mail education@aerhq.org.

Abuse Shelter Open – The Joint Military Family Abuse Shelter provides a safe place to stay, food, clothing and personal care items, transportation, child care, crisis counseling, information and referral, advocacy, education, safety planning, and a 24-hour shelter and crisis hotline. All services are free and open to all branches of the military. Call the 24-hour crisis line 533-7125 for information or to talk to a support counselor.

Military Council of Catholic Women – MCCW meets each Thursday at AMR Chapel from 9 to 11:30 a.m. It begins with Mass and continues with fellowship and Bible study. Child care is free for those attending. Call Elsa for a child care reservation at 833-8175. Children must be registered for the Chapel STACC Site which is free.

Thinking about leaving

The Army? – The Army Career and Alumni Program can help with the decision. What the Army offers, compared to what’s available on the outside, may be better than one thinks. Find a job that’s a right match. Skills assessment, job search techniques, access to job openings are all part of the ACAP process. Counselors can help translate experiences and

skills into job market language and determine one’s fair market value. ACAP shows how to put the best foot forward with interview techniques, salary negotiation, dress for success, networking, resumes and cover letters. For more information, visit the Schofield Barracks ACAP office in the Aloha Center, building 690, 3rd Floor, Room 3H or call 655-1028.

Election

From A-1

“Because of the tremendous courage of United Nations elections officials and the willingness to cooperate with Afghan security forces and the coalition, we overcame that challenge. The Afghan security forces working with the coalition preempted insurgent attacks on Afghans going to the polls.”

Afghan National Army troops, along with Afghan National Police, provided security at the 4,780 polling centers throughout Afghanistan. Coalition troops from Combined Joint Task Force 76 were on standby, ready to react to any attack by insurgents. But for the most part, the attacks never came.

“We showed (the insurgents) a little different set today than we have shown any other day because today’s mission is to specifically secure the elections,” Olson said. “We’ve maintained more capable and plentiful reserves to react to anything



Video still by Pfc. Mary Simms

A line of Afghan men wait for their opportunity to vote in Afghanistan’s first democratic presidential election Oct. 9.

today.”

The Joint Electoral Management Body, a U.N.-Afghan organization, was in charge of administering the

electoral process. The JEMB ensured many safeguards were in place to prevent voter fraud.

First, the JEMB officials

would mark the thumb of each voter with indelible ink, and then would punch a hole in their voting registration card. Reports from a few



Video still by Pfc. Mary Simms

A Joint Electoral Management Body employee marks the cuticle of an Afghan voter with indelible ink to prevent voter fraud during Afghanistan’s first democratic presidential election Oct. 9.

polling stations early in the day said the indelible ink was washing off too easily, creating allegations of voter fraud.

Afghan officials then called for the formation of an independent commission to investigate irregularities in the voting process. The 15 presidential candidates opposing interim Afghan President Hamid Karzai said they would boycott the results of the election.

Following a meeting with

U.N. representative Jean Arnault and U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad, top challenger Yunus Qanooni said he would accept the findings of the electoral commission. Despite a few bumps in the road to democracy, Olson says the elections are the first of many steps to a safe and secure Afghanistan.

“If you talk to Soldiers of CJTF-76, they’ll tell you that our top priority are these elections,” Olson said. “They understand that there is a link between free elections in Afghanistan and a secure and stable environment here. A secure and stable environment here means no sanctuary or safe haven for terrorism in Afghanistan. The elections were a huge success.”

As Madame Gul left the polling center in Raban, she had a simple message about democracy.

“We want freedom, we would like to live in peace,” Gul said.

“We don’t want anybody to take our life away from us, we want to be free.”

Wolfhounds

From A-1

paperwork, which is something he thinks should continue.

“A description of a vehicle or a photo of a person could really help us in future operations,” Hammer said. “So, the information [gathered] today is really a success even though we didn’t find any large weapons.”

The demonstration of U.S. combat power was what Trombetta thought was an important aspect of the mission.

Operation Wolfhound Fury “shows the Iraqi people that we can arrive at any time and put about 500 troops on the ground within 30 minutes in the middle of the night,” Trombetta said. “Secondly, it shows that we are here for them and we operate in all different parts of our area of operations to support their stability.”

Trombetta also thought highly of his Soldiers’ performance during the operation.

“My platoon did awesome and maintained high standards. They proved that once again under adverse conditions in an unfriendly environment they were able to push themselves past the limits of human capacity,” Trombetta said.

At the end of Operation Wolfhound Fury, TF 1-27 Inf. detained several persons of interest, as well as a significant amount of weapons and ammunition.

“I think our presence alone in that area should significantly deter quite a bit of enemy activity for the next couple of months,” Olshansky said.

“We already received reports that the terrorist cells who have been working up there are now looking to move their operations elsewhere. We denied them the sanctuary they found there previously.”



Hawaii military flu vaccination program on hold

By Les Ozawa
TAMC Public Affairs

Local and national media reported that Chiron Corporation notified the Centers for Disease Control that its influenza vaccine, Fluvirin, could not be distributed for the 2004-5 influenza season Oct. 5. This reduces the most commonly used inactivated flu vaccine in the United States by half.

The Department of Defense expected Chiron to provide more than half of its flu vaccine stock. DoD officials are now meeting to determine how to distribute its limited supply of influenza vaccine to protect active duty and other beneficiaries. Military medical authorities are awaiting more guidance on prioritizing the administration of limited vaccine supplies. Personnel deploying overseas, however, may still receive flu shots through their military units.

Information about the Tripler Army Medical Center flu program will be announced when plans are established. For more information, call the TAMC immunization clinic at 433-6334 or visit the TAMC Web site at www.tamc.amedd.army.mil.

Additional information is available at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Web site, www.hhs.gov; and the Center for Disease Control Web site, www.cdc.gov/flu.

Operation Crayon jumpstarts Iraqi school year

By 2nd Lt. Joel Haas
Battery B, 1-62 ADA

FOB WARRIOR, Iraq – As schools opened this month, hundreds of children from the town of Dibis were welcomed back with American kindness and generosity.

Early in the mornings, during the first week of October, Soldiers from Beast Battery, 1-62 Air Defense Artillery, and 2nd Brigade Combat Team saddled-up for a tactical convoy to deliver hundreds of bags filled with notebooks, pens, pencils, erasers, blunt-tip scissors, glue, crayon boxes and other school supplies.

This mission was the final and most anticipated phase of Operation Crayon. All the children were thrilled to see our Soldiers. Local town’s officials, to include the Dibis Mayor, were present to welcome our Soldiers as well.

Operation Crayon is a joint program run by Soldiers and Airmen from FOB Warrior and headed by Chief Warrant Officer Randall Reynolds, 2nd BCT IO officer. Its noble objective is to provide much needed school supplies to Iraqi



Spc. Kent Bartley

1st Sgt. Charles Alsleben hands out candy to eager Iraqi boys during Operation Crayon in October.

school children and further enhance the good relations with the people of Kirkuk and its surrounding towns.

Capt. Winston M. Marbella, commander, Battery B, 1-62 ADA explained, “All of us were anticipating this day. Months prior to

the schools’ opening, many of these “Beast” Battery Soldiers selflessly volunteered hundreds of personal hours sorting and bagging tons of school supplies.

“Iraq schools don’t have much in terms of school supplies and anything we can give helps

tremendously,” Marbella said.

With the support of many charitable organizations, generous Americans back home, and lots of sweat from these Soldiers, the school year kicked off to a great start.

When asked what he liked most during the visit, Spc. Miguel Ordonez replied, “the smile on the kids’ faces, giving them something they never had before, and showing them we cared.”

Operation Crayon is also an opportunity for the Soldiers to see whom they are fighting for.

“It lets us know that we are making a difference in their lives. That’s satisfaction for me,” said Cpl. Michael Jones. “It’s amazing to see children ask the Soldiers for the simplest of things like flashlights, gum, or extra pens. Items we don’t think twice about are things they loved as gifts.”

Besides school supplies, Soldiers also handed out candy and stuffed animals (Beenie Babies) to the children, instantly brightening their young faces.

“The look in their eyes is one I will never forget, I saw my two kids in their faces whom I miss so

much,” said Cpl. Jeff Simpson. The children and teachers were very appreciative and gave the Soldiers huge smiles and high-fives to show their gratitude. It was an eye-opening experience for many young Soldiers and reminded them how fortunate we are as Americans, and that they are making a difference in the lives of the Iraqis.

Many said that this was their best day in Iraq.

“I wish I could more for them,” Spc. Sean Morgan stated.

Marbella concluded, “Hopefully, when these kids grow up, they will tell their children and their grandchildren that when the American Soldiers came, they gave us school supplies, toys, and candies. They were generous and kind. They treated us with respect, gave us hope, and taught us the ‘shaka sign.’”

As noon approached, the Soldiers said goodbye to their new little friends. The warriors saddled back up with weapons loaded for the tactical convoy back to FOB Warrior as the children, still smiling, waved goodbye and flashed the shaka sign.

Signal unit responds to FOB’s growing needs

By Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Det.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan — Just a few months ago, Forward Operating Base Salerno had only 22 phones and 20 computer connections to support the base population. The arrival of Combined Task Force Thunder and the establishment of Regional Command East caused the demands for communications at the FOB to skyrocket.

The challenge for more

than 40 Soldiers from 125th Signal Battalion, part of the 25th Infantry Division (Light) out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, was to lay the groundwork for a robust communications network able to meet Salerno’s growing needs.

“When we first arrived here, we knew we had a lot of work to do in a short amount of time,” said Spc. Cory Burke, 125th Sig. Bn. networking switching operator. “But we just took it day-by-day and accomplished each task as quickly as possible.”

The signal element’s first challenge was to establish a communications infrastructure.

The unit ran fiber optic cable throughout Salerno, a process that initially took longer, but set future units rotating into the FOB up for success, said 1st Lt. James Howell, FOB Salerno signal site officer in charge.

“Fiber optics was one of the best platforms we could install,” said Howell.

Fiber optics offers many advantages over other networking cables.

“(Fiber optics) is very reliable, commercial-grade cable that can handle a large volume of data,” said Howell.

To handle the increase of troops operating out of Salerno, the signal element also upgraded its traditional Force Entry Node system to a Base Band Node and Triband Satellite system.

The upgrade not only provided increased capability and reliability, but was the first time the equipment was used in a battlefield situation.

Incorporating civilian contractors into their team, the 125th Sig. Element quickly set up the new equipment.

“We are one of the first of many Army units that will use this equipment,” said Howell. “So far, it has been very effective and reliable.”

As a result of the new equipment and infrastructure upgrade, the network on Salerno now supports more than 400 computer connections and more than 200 telephones. The new network can now transmit more than four times as much data as it did before.

So far, the communications systems in Salerno have processed more than 200,000 phone calls with a 98.6 percent success rate.

In addition to the work done to increase communica-

tions in Salerno, the entire system is now much more ready for the demands of the battlefield.

Wilcox said one of the most important upgrades the signal element has added to communications in Salerno is reliability.

“One of our biggest objectives was to provide redundancy for our communications network,” said Staff Sgt. Daniel Wilcox, 125th Sig. Bn. squad leader. “Redundancy means if one of our systems or satellite connections were to

fail, there are others to compensate.”

Although the unit was provided with the best equipment available to handle the mission, Wilcox said it was the Soldiers who made it possible to meet the intense time schedules.

“We have a lot of personal pride in our jobs out here,” said Wilcox. “We ... will do whatever it takes to support this base.”

Burke said the large workload is exactly what he expected before coming to

Afghanistan and didn’t want it any other way.

“I’d rather be here than anywhere else,” he said. “Mission-wise, this is exactly what I wanted to be doing.”

Wilcox said the pride he and his Soldiers have for their mission is reaffirmed each day.

“Every time I walk into the (tactical operations center) it makes me feel good, because I can see the result of all our hard work with all the phones ringing and people working on their computers.”



Sgt. Frank Magni

Spc. Wesley Watkins, 125th Sig. Bn., installs a tactical telephone junction box at FOB Salerno, Afghanistan.



Spc. Sean Kimmons

Spc. Joe Bergen (left) and Sgt. Wayne Pitroff (right), a driver and squad leader with the mortar platoon, compile ammunition left from the old Iraqi Army in abandoned bunkers at the Al Fattah airfield. Insurgents in the area use these types of ammunition in their Improvised Explosive Devices.

A day with the mortar platoon

Spc. Sean Kimmons
25th ID (L) Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MCHENRY, Iraq – It was another eventful day for the mortar platoon of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force 1-27 Infantry as they conducted multiple missions on Oct. 7. After leaving base perimeters in the morning, the mortar platoon conveyed to the abandoned Al Fattah airfield to execute their first mission of the day – to destroy enemy rocket-propelled grenade launchers seized from previous missions. But first, the mortar platoon Soldiers cleared about 400 rounds of 28mm and 37mm ammunition from nearby scorpion-infested bunkers. “Wherever we go as part of our patrols, we look for weapon caches and anything that looks out of the ordinary,” said Sgt. Elijah Plante, acting platoon sergeant of the mortar platoon. “It’s important to get anything out from the hands of insurgents, because it can be used against [Iraqi Security Forces] and us.” Plante went on to say that TF 1-27 Inf. has recently seen a newer kind of improvised explosive device pop up in their AO and the rounds that were policed up in the bunkers could have been perfect for them.

“[Insurgents] know how to use whatever they have to make the best explosion. They could have put all of those rounds around a mortar round -- put it alongside the road with a fuse and use the rounds as shrapnel,” Plante said. With the surrounding area cleared of bystanders, the mortar platoon Soldiers blasted the RPGs using their crew-served and small-arm weapons in an attempt of rendering the launchers useless. One of the crew-served weapons shooting off rounds was the MK-19 grenade launcher. The platoon used this opportunity to have Soldiers who never fired it before, qualify on the weapon system. “The MK-19 is a fairly new weapon to our platoon, because we never messed with it back in the rear,” said Spc. Joe Bergen, a driver with the mortar platoon. “It’s something good for the Soldiers to know, in case the gunner goes down.” Once the RPG launchers were left in shreds, a “mission complete” was yelled from one of the Soldiers. The next mission was to carry out a weapon cache search in the hills near the town of Bayji, home to an important oil refinery that has recently been the target of insurgent attacks.

Last time in this area, the platoon found a 15-foot SA-3 missile. This missile has been one of the biggest finds by a 2nd Brigade Combat Team unit. Unfortunately, this time around there was no such luck. About an hour of searching in the rolling hills, the convoy headed to an Iraqi National Guard checkpoint across the Tigris River from the Bayji oil refinery. Soldiers inspected ING operations and also examined a possible IED lookout point where black wires were found protruding from the ground near the key Bayji checkpoint. The platoon then conducted a joint traffic control point with the ING troops to ensure they were performing their TCP to standard, as well as show U.S. presence within the area. “It’s all about making our presence known out there,” Bergen said. “Anytime we’re out there, it deters the bad guys from trafficking weapons. Every little bit helps.” Plante said that these types of missions are routine for the mortar platoon, but doesn’t mean they’re not vital to TF 1-27 INF’s overall mission. “Every mission is important to our mission as a battalion, no matter how little or big,” Plante said.

Soldiers become U.S. citizens overseas

By Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl
17th Public Affairs Det.

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan – For centuries, the freedoms and opportunities of the United States fueled the dreams of the oppressed. Millions of people overcame great obstacles to travel there, looking to live the “American Dream.” For 17 members of the Coalition serving in Afghanistan, the American Dream became a reality as they took the oath of citizenship at Bagram Air Base Oct. 1. The National Defense Act signed by President George W. Bush last year legalized the naturalization of U.S. service members on foreign soil, allowing these 17 Soldiers to become the first to take the oath overseas. “The people around you are welcoming you as citizens with open arms,” said U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad during the ceremony. “You are able to pursue the dreams and high ideals that are part of the American creed.” Ranging in rank from private first class to staff sergeant, these 17 Soldiers represent 13 different countries, but each of them was willing to fight for the country they now call “home.” “I can’t be any more proud of bringing the pride and honor of being a citizen to people who are defending America,” said Eduardo Aguirre, Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. “It’s important to defend our



Photo

Staff Sgt. Joanna Drozd, a native of Poland, leads 16 other Soldiers in the Pledge of Allegiance during the naturalization ceremony Oct. 1.

freedom, it’s not cheap; it costs blood. Each of these Soldiers is willing to pay that price.” Spc. Christian Rendonvelasquez is one of the Soldiers willing to pay the price to be free. A native of Columbia, Rendonvelasquez has lived in the United States for 16 years and is the last member of his immediate family to become a naturalized citizen. He is also the first person in his entire family to serve in the U.S. military. “After 9/11 I thought it was my duty as an alien resident to help in the fight,” said Rendonvelasquez, a member of 2nd Battalion, 265th Air Defense Artillery Regiment. “Now, I think it’s the best feeling in the world to know I am serving my country.” Non-citizens are able to serve in the U.S. military, but they are restricted to an eight-year period of service. There are other limitations as well, such as the level of clearance they can receive and the ranks they can obtain. These restrictions spurred one Soldier, Spc. Ronald J. Carrion, 125th Signal Battalion, CJTF-76, to work hard to become a citizen. “I’ve been in the Army for four years,” said Carrion. “I enjoy serving, and I want to become a warrant officer. I knew to do that, I needed to become a citizen.” Carrion moved to the United States from Ecuador 12 years ago. “My father was looking for a better future for us. He’s still working on attaining some of his goals, but I know we’ve lived a much better life.” Now that he’s become a citizen of the United States, Carrion is able to continue pursuing his goals within the military. He said one thing has changed, however. “Now, I am serving my country.”

Insignia represents service of the ‘warfighter’



Story and photo by
Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl
17th Public Affairs Det.

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — While many Soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division (Light) have been doing their part in Operation Enduring Freedom for more than six months, the Joint Logistics Command has played a role for an even longer period of time.

To recognize that, and their ongoing efforts, Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, Combined Joint Task Force-76 commander; along with CJTF-76 Command Sgt. Maj. Franklin G. Ashe, presented the members of the JLC with the shoulder sleeve insignia for former wartime service and the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal.

“No organization has made more lasting and significant changes and contributions to CJTF-76,” said Olson to the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen standing in formation at Bagram Air Base Sept. 28.

Built around the 25th Inf. Div. (Light) Division Support Command, the JLC is responsible for providing logistical support throughout the Combined Joint Operations Area.

This role began even before units from the 25th ID (L) out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, stepped foot in Afghanistan.

“We tracked all the [25th ID (L)] equipment all the way around the world,” said Capt. Kimberly D. Nash, JLC plans officer in charge. That was

Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson presents Staff Sgt. Lorna Longest, a member of the JLC’s Movement Control Battalion, with the shoulder sleeve insignia for former wartime service. The MCB is responsible for helping to coordinate and track the movement of all coalition personnel and equipment throughout the Combined Joint Operations Area.

just the start of the mission for the JLC.

“We provide continued and improving support to the units throughout the CJOA,” said Spc. Douglas Andrews, an administrative specialist for the Distribution Management Center, one part of the JLC.

Now, and for the past six months, the approximately 1,000 members of the JLC have ensured warfighters throughout Afghanistan, both U.S. and coalition, have the food, ammunition, equipment and repair parts necessary to take the fight to the enemy. They also provide medical, financial and administrative support.

“Our troops have built Salerno, not to mention (Regional Command) East, into logistics hubs,” said Nash. “In a matter of days, we built RC West into a hub able to support more than 1,500 people.

“The JLC initiated the (Mobile Maintenance Support Team),” she added. This non-doctrinal team was created because of the “diversity of the mission.”

“The MMST provides direct support-level maintenance to the very front lines,” explained Nash. “They save the military millions of dollars. And, more importantly, fix broken pieces of equipment for the warfighter at the frontline.”

By providing all this support, the members of the JLC are continuously reaffirming their commitment to Operation Enduring Freedom. In honor of this, they will wear the patch of the 25th ID (L) not only on their left shoulder, but also their right, a symbol of the sacrifices and efforts they have all made.

“This patch identifies me as a member of a team that not only supports the warfighter daily, but is currently deployed as far forward as any of our fighting troops,” said Nash. “Our logistics support personnel have come back (to Bagram) with blood on their boots – there are no (front) lines here.”

TF Guardian recognizes combat service

By Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Det.

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Members of Task Force Guardian gathered for a ceremony where they were recognized for their service to the Military Police Corps and their support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Sept. 28.

During the ceremony at Bagram Air Base, the Soldiers of TF Guardian received the shoulder sleeve insignia for former wartime service, and some received Purple Hearts.

In the formation representing TF Guardian was the 58th MP Company, from the 25th Infantry Division (Light), Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; the 450th MP Co. from the 81st Regional Readiness Command, U.S. Army Reserve, Nashville, Tenn.; and the 551st MP Co. from the 101st Airborne Div. (Air Assault), from Fort Campbell, Ky.

“We have come here to honor our Soldiers,” said Lt. Col. Mike Blackwell, TF Guardian commander. “We are here to honor their service.”

Combined Joint Task Force-76 Commander Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson said he was honored to present the Tropic Lightning patch, and noted its significance.

“The last time this patch was awarded was the Vietnam War,” said Olson.

With a small number of Soldiers that fought in Vietnam still in the Army, Olson said the Tropic Lightning patch will now represent contributions the division is making to the Global War on Terrorism.

In addition to the SSI, Olson awarded three Purple Hearts to military police

officers who suffered injuries during their service in OEF.

In his remarks at the ceremony, he said the Purple Heart is a distinctive decoration given to very few in the Army.

“This award demonstrates that a Soldier accepted danger and sacrificed personal safety,” he said. “The Purple Heart also shows the sacrifice some Soldiers make while on the battlefield.”

The three Soldiers that received the Purple Heart were Sgt. Daniel McKeehan, Spc. Patrick Little and Pvt. Robert Schloss, all of the 551st MP Co. Little and Schloss received their wounds in an incident separate from McKeehan.

McKeehan was on a security detail in Herat city when he was wounded.

He was on a crowded street providing security for a local leader, when he was attacked by an insurgent.

“I was just reaching into my vehicle when somebody came up from behind me,” said McKeehan.

The insurgent, armed with a knife, inflicted a wound on McKeehan’s jaw. McKeehan grabbed his attacker’s hand and, with the aid of an Afghan security officer, subdued him.

“It all happened before I knew it,” said McKeehan. This just went to show the importance of training. Without it, McKeehan may not have survived the incident.

Little and Schloss were wounded while conducting convoy security for the Afghan National Army in the Ghor Province, near the city of Chaghcharan.

The convoy was

ambushed, and Schloss received gunshot wounds to his back and shoulder. The round that entered Schloss’ back hit just below the protective plate of his body armor. Fortunately, the Kevlar lining of the vest slowed it enough to minimize damage.

After Schloss was incapacitated, Little stepped in, taking Schloss’ place in the turret of the up-armored high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle. He returned fire with the MK-19 grenade launcher and his M-4 carbine, ducking low when the convoy received the heaviest fire.

During the fusillade of fire, Little received a gunshot wound to the head and, simultaneously, a piece of shrapnel struck his arm.

Little said he didn’t know from what angle the bullet came, but he suspects that it ricocheted off the top of the HMMWV.

Just like Schloss’ wound, the momentum of the enemy fire was slowed just enough to make his wound less life threatening. Little still doesn’t know where the shrapnel came from.

“My parents said my head was just too hard for the bullet to penetrate,” said Little jokingly.

Both Soldiers received treatment from an Army medic and remained with the convoy through the five-hour firefight that ensued.

All three 551st Soldiers who received Purple Hearts were injured just a few months ago. They have since recovered, and returned to full duty for their unit’s next “rendezvous with destiny.”

Little said this is something he has appreciated the most.

“Our unit has done a great job of just treating us like they always did,” he said. “That has helped me the most in getting back out there.”

Part of getting back out there has been realizing their situations couldn’t be changed.

“We did everything we were supposed to do,” said Schloss. “We just reacted instinctively and did what we were trained to do.”

Knowing that, all three Soldiers said they are honored to receive the Purple Heart, but they are just interested in continuing with their duties in Operation Enduring Freedom.

“I will just keep on doing my job the way I always did it,” said McKeenan.

Soldiers receive shoulder sleeve insignia

By
Sgt. 1st Class Darren Heusel
105th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

KABUL, Afghanistan — With “Old Glory” standing perfectly still at attention and a lethargic sun setting slowly in the background, Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson congratulated approximately 60 Soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division (Light), based out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, for their participation in Operation Enduring Freedom.

Olson, a native of Wantagh, N.Y., and Combined Joint Task Force-76 commander, presented the Soldiers the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and shoulder sleeve insignia for former wartime service, during a ceremony in the “Bomb House” courtyard at the Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan headquarters in Kabul Sept. 25.

“You are changing the course of a nation. You are making history,” said Olson. “You are the ones who are going to make sure we have (the Afghan presidential election). You are shaping a nation.”

The 25th Inf. Div. (Light) arrived in Afghanistan in April, taking over the year-long mis-

sion from the 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, N.Y.

“We see the misery throughout Afghanistan and we care about the human condition,” said Olson. “But we also care about the security of the United States of America and we are going to change that by what we’re doing here.

“What you are doing here is fighting an enemy that attacked our way of life on our own soil. What you have sworn to do is defend our nation against all enemies, foreign and domestic. You swore to put your life on the line to ensure what happened three years ago on Sept. 11 doesn’t happen again.”

Olson went on to praise the Soldiers for their service by saying, “You are getting high marks throughout the command. We are here at a critical time, and we will make a difference for this nation and our nation.

Finally, Olson thanked the Soldiers for their service, giving reference to the patch worn on their left sleeve that has a lightning bolt splitting a taro leaf, a plant native to Hawaii.

“Thank you for your service. Thank you for what you do,” he said. “I thank God for the Tropic Lightning.”

New employment initiative for wounded vets unveiled

By Sgt. 1st Class
Doug Sample,
*USA American Forces
Press Service*

WASHINGTON – Injured service members returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan will get individualized job training, counseling and re-employment services, Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao announced Oct. 4.

During a signing ceremony at Walter Reed Army Medical Center here, Chao joined Army Maj. Gen. Kenneth Farmer Jr., commanding general at the Army hospital, and Navy Rear Adm. Adam M. Robinson, commanding officer of the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., to kick off the first phase of REALifelines (Recovery and Employment Assistance Lifelines), a joint commitment by the Department of Labor, the military medical community and local agencies.

The Labor Department is investing \$500,000 into the first phase of the program, which will create a team of on-site counselors at both medical facilities to help wounded veterans in

their transition back into the private sector.

REALifeline counselors will help service members identify barriers to employment and set up individual recovery and re-employment plans, Chao said.

"They are going to help each person discover his or her personal interest and unique talent," she said. "And they will help each veteran find the right career path to his or her special need."

She emphasized that "personalized care" will be a priority of the program. "If you have been wounded or injured serving this nation, real people are going to meet you face to face with the personalized help that you may need to recover and to succeed in a career that you love," Chao said.

The program will also provide a national tracking system to ensure follow-up services and link service members with local professionals able to support their recovery and re-employment through a range of services.

In addition, she said, a national call center will soon be available to answer questions and offer employment guidance to wounded veterans.

“
They are going to help each person discover his or her personal interest and unique talent.”
- Elaine L. Chao

As part of the program, wounded veterans and their spouses also will be able to take advantage of services offered at more than 3,500 one-stop career centers the Department of Labor has set up nationwide.

"This administration is committed to ensuring that our nation's wounded veterans are treated with the respect and honor that they deserve," Chao told an audience of current and former Soldiers – some of them patients at the hospital – others veterans in wheelchairs, and Purple Heart recipients.

The new benefits will come in handy for those like Army Reserve Sgt. 1st Class Shakur Abdul Ali, of Philadelphia. The 22-year veteran injured his back while on duty in Iraq and may need surgery.

"This is a very important step for Soldiers," Ali said. "The soldier needs to know there is something out there to reward them, to let them know they are not just being kicked to the curb," he said. "This is something that will uplift their spirits and let them know that that their service wasn't in vain."

Army Reserve Spc. Elijah Stephens, of Flowery Branch, Ga., shares that view. Stephens has a heart condition and was sent home from Iraq after serving seven months there.

"It's really good to see Soldiers taken care of because people come back and their lives are changed forever," he noted. "It gives them something to look forward to. ... This isn't the end of my life as I know it."

The secretary apologized for being several minutes late for the signing ceremony, after overspending her

time at the hospital's physical-therapy ward, where she met with wounded service members and their families.

She said the time spent was "rewarding" and called the Soldiers "some of the most inspiring and outstanding young men and women that I have ever met."

"And I'm so proud of them," she added.

Chao, who visited troops in Iraq earlier this year, said the country owes a "tremendous debt of gratitude" not only to wounded veterans, but to all the brave men and women who have defended our nation in the global war on terrorism with such honor and with such valor."

The Oct. 4 signing was not the first time the Department of Labor has reached out to support service members.

On Sept. 27, the secretary signed a memorandum of understanding with the Justice Department that will ensure the employment rights of returning service members are protected under guidelines of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994.

DoD aims to attract more hispanics to its work force

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – The Defense Department is increasingly reaching out to Hispanic organizations to get the word out about the broad range of military and civil service opportunities open to Hispanics, the Pentagon's top personnel officer told the American Forces Press Service today.

Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness David S.C. Chu said Hispanic representation in the armed forces has grown steadily during the past 10 years, and that DoD is continuing to make a concerted effort to attract more Hispanics to its work force.

Hispanics represent 9.9 percent of the active-duty enlisted force and 4.7 percent of the active-duty officer corps. In the reserve components, Hispanics make up 9.1 percent of enlisted service members and 4.3 percent of officers.

In contrast, Hispanics make up 16 percent of the 18-to-24-year-olds in the U.S. population.

Chu said Hispanic representation isn't shared equally by the military services. The Marine Corps is doing the best job of attracting Hispanics, he said, with Hispanics making up 14.5 percent of its enlisted force and 6.4 percent of its offi-

cer corps. The Army follows closely behind, trailed by the Navy. But with Hispanics making up just 6 percent of its enlisted force and 3.6 percent of its officers, the Air Force faces "the biggest challenge," Chu said. Hispanics make up 6.2 percent of DoD's civil service work force, officials reported.

Chu said DoD is working with several Hispanic organizations to help overcome roadblocks in attracting Hispanics into military and civilian jobs in the department. One problem, he said, is that the Hispanic community doesn't tend to put as much emphasis as some other groups on finishing high school – a virtual prerequisite to enlisting in the military.

Chu said the military's requirement that enlistees receive a high school diploma "isn't about smarts," but rather, provides an indicator of the person's ability to function in a structured environment.

Similarly, Chu said, Hispanics are less likely than some other groups to go on to college, possibly because they don't know about programs such as ROTC available to help them. Because all military officers must have a four-year degree under their belt, Chu said this means fewer Hispanics qualify to earn commissions.

At the same time, Chu said, Hispanic youth are facing the same phenomenon young people in other cultural groups are experiencing: their parents, teachers and other role models aren't necessarily supporting their interest in military service.

In response, the Defense Department is using a far-reaching strategy to attract Hispanics, from partnering with Hispanic groups to running ads directed at young people as well as adults in a position to influence their decisions, to sponsoring stay-in-school campaigns directed at Hispanic youth.

For the first time this year, DoD and all the military services participated in the League of United Latin American Citizen's annual training conference and convention, held in July in San Antonio.

During the session, DoD entered into a memorandum of understanding with the league supporting efforts to recruit and employ more Hispanics, showcased Hispanic military heroes from the past as well as on the battlefield today in Afghanistan and Iraq, and sponsored a career fair luncheon.

"It was clear that they were very appreciative of this outreach," Chu said.

DoD officials met again last week with League of United

Latin American Citizens members to reaffirm the relationship.

In addition, the Army has an extensive stay-in-school outreach campaign, Operation Graduation, run in partnership with the Ad Council, that features funny and poignant television and radio spots in both English and Spanish.

The Army also has a "You Soy El Army" advertising campaign, the Spanish-language counterpart to the "Army of

One" program, which airs nationally on the Univision and Telemundo cable networks as well as on radio stations in key Hispanic markets.

The services also are turning to the Internet to reach the Hispanic community. In addition to a Spanish version of its Web site, the Army has five bilingual "cyber recruiters" available to address specific questions in their online chat room. The Navy also has a Spanish version of its Web site.

Chu said he's optimistic that these and other initiatives will have a positive impact on recruiting efforts by sending a clear message to recruitment-age Hispanics and their role models about opportunities for them in DoD.

"We must appeal to the full cross-section of young Americans with sufficient encouragement so they are interested in considering a tour of military duty or perhaps a career," he said.

Angels in paradise



Kelly Slater

The Navy’s Blue Angels flight demonstration team put on an aerobatic air performance for military, their families, and the Hawaii community Oct. 9 -10 at Kaneohe Bay Marine Corp Base. Since 1946, the team has performed for more than 380 million people.



COMMUNITY & SPORTS

Friday

B-1

October 15, 2004



pulsating Hispanic Party

By Rafi Grant
Contributing Writer

"I'm cooking Puerto Rican food, would you like some rice and beans?" asked Patricia Cancel, owner of La Cocinita Catering de la Isla del Encanto, in her Puerto Rican dialect.

She prepared delicious and spicy dishes from her home country on a little gas cooker, while hungry customers stood in line to taste a little Hispanic flavor, listen to the sounds of Latin American music, and embrace the unfamiliar culture as they visited the Hispanic Heritage Festival held Oct. 9 at Kapiolani Park.

The festival is organized every year by the Hawaii Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with the Hispanic Center of Hawaii to bring together the Hispanic community and familiarize tourists, locals and military personnel with the culture," explained Susana G. Ho, president of the HHCC.

It transforms the usual Hawaiian atmosphere into a pulsating Hispanic party with traditional dance and music performances, food booths and arts and crafts.

Around the Kapiolani Bandstand, Hispanic restaurants offered a variety of traditional dishes from regions in Latin and South America.

"This is my first time at the festival," Cancel explained while frying her fritters. "I moved to Hawaii about 12 months ago, leaving the cold and rainy weather of Massachusetts behind," she said with a smile while moving to the vivid rhythm of Latino music.

Next door, Mexican spicy and hot aromas spread from Julio's ovens. Julio, an Air Force Reservist, prepared tamales and burritos.

"After leaving the military I could not leave the beautiful islands and I opened Fiesta's Mexican Grill in Ewa Beach," explained Julio.

While hungry mouths were filled with Hispanic delicacies, a variety of bands captured the visitors and led them on a musical journey through the Latino continents.

Tommy y Sus Amigos, Son Caribe, El Conjunto Tropical, Wally Rita and the Latin Amigos, and Mariachi Loco featured rhythms that "let the heart and soul feel the hot atmosphere of Hispanic parties" said Belinda Davids, a tourist from California.

The visitors at the festival got more than just a taste of Hispanic food and music.

Folklorico Del Mar, a folkloric dance school from California, introduced traditional dances from several regions including Mexico, Guadalajara, La Puebla, Veracruz, Jalisco, Chilhuahua, and Michoacan.

Students from ages four and older told stories with the dances, "expressing rites, customs and traditions, that may be considered a testimony or demonstration of spiritual values for the Mexican ethnic groups," explained Louisa G. Kawamoto, the school's instructor.

New at this year's festival was the Hispanic Family Health Fair, where more than 35 health agencies offered free health screenings and "good-for-you" food samples. Viva la Salud!, one of the health agencies, featured eligibility interviews and health measurements. Moreover, the group offered information on physical activity, body image and weight concerns, and smoking cessation programs for Hispanics and Latinos.

Dr. Lisa A. P. Sanchez-Johnson, Chair of the Hispanic and Latino Health Advisory Board and University of Hawaii assistant professor, pointed out that "the festival is a great possibility for us to reach out to the families of the Hispanic community, who are spread out over the various neighborhoods on the island.

"Compared to cities on the mainland, the Hispanic community in Hawaii does not live in so-called barrios, or Hispanic neighborhoods," explained Sanchez-Johnson. This is what makes a systematic outreach with the community sometimes difficult.

The Hispanic Heritage Festival "is just one of a number of events we organize for the community on the island," explained Ho. Throughout the year the HHCC features distinctive events including the Cinco de Mayo Run, Dia de San Juan, and a variety of dance festivals.

To learn more about Hispanic culture and history or the Hawaiian Hispanic Chamber of Commerce contact Susana Ho at 398-3084 or Nancy Ortiz at 941-5216. For information on health issues as well as health related workshops, Dr. Sanchez-Johnson can be reached at 295-2971.

1-4 Students from the Folklorico Del Mar school perform traditional Mexican Dances at the Hispanic Heritage Month festival at Kapiolani Park Oct. 9



5. Members of Su Gran Alabanza prepare Pupusas for a hungry crowd. 6. Hispanic arts and crafts were on sale at the festival. 7. Patricia Cancel, owner of La Cocinita Catering fries fish fritters on a gas grill for visitors to the Hispanic Heritage festival Oct. 9.

Halloween Monster Bash – It's a graveyard smash with costume contests, light pupus, drink specials, games and prizes at the Nehelani, Schofield Barracks on Oct. 29, 7 – 11 p.m. Adults only. Call 655-4646.

2004 Youth Basketball Clinic – Prepare for the upcoming Hawaii Youth Sports League Basketball season. Clinic is open to boys and girls born in the years 1988 – 1999. Clinic includes offensive (passing, dribbling, shooting, etc) and defensive (rebounding, block out, foot-work etc.) skills and drills. Registration begins Oct. 26 and continues until Nov. 16. Register at the nearest Army Youth Center, AMR 836-1923, Fort Shafter 438-9336, or Schofield Barracks 655-6465. Children must be registered with Child and Youth Services.

Information, Ticketing and Registration – Are you looking for tickets to area attractions? Visit the ITR offices located on Schofield Barracks and on Fort Shafter. ITR offers a variety of tickets that include: Luaus, cruises, whale watching adventures, water park, Sea Life National Park, movie tickets, inter – island packages and much more. Call today, Schofield Barracks 655-9971 or Fort Shafter 438-1985. Or log on to www.mwrarmyhawaii.com and click on ITR for a full list of discounts at the various attractions.

Free Yoga Class – A free Introduction to Yoga class will be held at the Health and Fitness Center on Schofield Barracks every Wednesday at 4:15 p.m. until Dec. 1. Reduce stress and tension and enhance your strength, flexibility, balance, and breathing. Mats are provided. Call 655-8007 for information.

Care Packages – Wrap up that care package for deployed troops at the Fort Shafter Library Oct. 17 from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. or at the Tropics, Schofield Barracks from 12 – 4 p.m. We do not take packages to the post office or pay for mailing.

Lifetime Sports and Recreation – October is the

last chance to enter the free Nov. 1 drawing for two nights lodging at Pililaau Army Recreation Center or Kilauea Military Camp. Lifetime Sports and Recreation brochures are available at any community recreation division facility. Points are then earned when patrons visit and use the facilities or participate in selected activities and special events. One through five points will be awarded for each activity. After twenty points, earn a limited edition, long-sleeve or standard T-shirt and on the second 20 points earn a cap. Quantities are limited.

Outdoor Recreation Rentals – Supplying all party needs to include: Rental tables, chairs, canopies and inflatables or a dunk tank for the kids. Going camping? We can supply all the gear, from tents and coolers to stoves. Located on Schofield Barracks, open everyday, except Tuesday. Call 655-0143.

Spouse's Night Out – This free adults-only program at Army Community Service on Schofield Barracks is designed to get spouses out of the house every Thursday night from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. to have fun. On Oct. 21, Enhancing Your

R&R: Family Readiness Group's with Dr. Faran, Maintaining Long Distance Relationships, Attitudinal Healing (3 of 6), Create Your own Family Web Page and Quilting. At the Tropics participate in Karaoke. Children ages 6 and up are welcome to participate in Tropics activities. MWR Blue Star Card holders will receive free child care from 6 - 9 p.m. by reservation only at Peterson Child Care Center. Call 655-3929 by noon of the Tuesday before each Thursday event to make child care reservations. Child care reservations can be made two weeks in advance. Pre-registration for classes required, call 655-2736.

2005 Army Soldier Show – Nominations are requested for the 2005 show. Nominations for vocalists, dancers, musicians and specialty acts are requested. Nominations for technicians are being accepted for lighting, audio, video, costume and stage technicians. Preference in selection is given to performers showing versatility in musical style and experience. Preference is given to technicians having experience and possessing a variety of skills. Nominations must be submitted no later than Nov. 15. Log on to [\[hawaii.com\]\(http://hawaii.com\) for more information or call 655-0112.](http://www.mwrarmy-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

\$.25 games at Wheeler Bowling Center – Every Wednesday from 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. pay \$.25 per game and \$.25 for shoes at Wheeler Bowling Center. Call 656-1745 for information.

Pumpkin Coloring Contest – Ages 12 and under can enter to win a fun-filled pumpkin. Entry blanks available at all Army Youth Centers and Tropics on Schofield Barracks. Entries will be displayed at Tropics from Oct. 1-31. Grand Prize Drawing will be held on Oct. 30, 6:30 p.m. The winner will be selected by random drawing from all the entries submitted. Call 655-0002 for more information.

Teen Read Week – From Monday through Oct. 23, it's Teen Read Week at the Aliamanu Library. All teens (12 – 18 years old) who borrow materials during the week will receive a treat. Teens who complete a reading interest survey will receive a prize and a chance to win a poster from the American Library Association Graphics Catalog. Call 833-4851.

Mongolian BBQ – Select favorites from a variety of meats and vegetables, and have them grilled to personal preferences Oct. 20 at 5 p.m.

at the Nehelani on Schofield Barracks, with seating at Reggie's. Meals are priced by the ounce. Reservations required by calling 655-0660

Harvest Week at the Tropics – The Tropics, building 589 on Schofield Barracks, is hosting Harvest Week from Oct. 25 – 31. On Oct. 25, 10 a.m. (for ages 5 years and younger) and 6 p.m. (open to all ages) make Halloween crafts for \$1. On Oct. 26. at 6 p.m. listen to spooky tales and eat free popcorn. On Oct. 27 at 7 p.m. play blacklight basketball and volleyball with a haunted twist, for ages 10 and above. On Oct. 28 at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. participate in pumpkin carving. Tropics will supply pumpkins to the first 20 registered or bring your own and learn some carving tips. On Oct. 29, teens can participate in a monster bash and costume dance from 6:30 – 9:30 p.m. Admission is \$3.

On Oct. 30 from 6 – 9 p.m. participate in games, a costume contest, a Scooby Doo marathon for kids or an adult scary movie with free popcorn beginning at 8 p.m. Eat caramel apples for \$1.50. Prizes awarded for the best costume in three age categories. On Oct. 31 trick or treat at the Tropics from 5 – 8 p.m. Call 655-0002 or 655-5697 for more information.

Ala Moana Shopping Trip – Shop at more than 240 stores and dine at one of the 70 restaurants offered at the Ala Moana Mall. Transportation will be provided on Oct. 19, departing from the Schofield Commissary at 9 a.m. and returning at 2 p.m. Reservations required. Call 655-0111/655-0112.

Are you interested in getting a massage? – Based on interest, a tour date will be set up and transportation will be provided. Call 655-0111 or 655-0112 for information.

Tropics Schofield Barracks October Food Special – Italian, ham, chicken salad, turkey, or roast beef sandwich with all the fixings for \$3.25. Add the soup of the day for \$1.50. Call 655-0002 for information.

Junior Bowling – Junior Bowling with instruc-

tion for beginners and bowling techniques for other experienced junior bowlers is available every Saturday at the Fort Shafter Bowling Center. Call 438-6733 for information.

Tropic Lightning Items for Sale – Tropic Lightning Coffee, whole bean or ground for \$7.75 or Tropic Lightning Water, 23.9 oz for \$1.25 at the Tropics, building 589 on Schofield Barracks. Call 655-0002 for information.

Customized Engraving – Customize your special gift with an engraved message. The Schofield Barracks Arts and Crafts Center can customize any wood, plastic and metal items with your requested text or graphics. Photos, logos or names can also be put onto coffee cups, mouse pads and more. Call 655-6330 for information.

Join the New Teen Center – Are you between the ages of 11 – 18? If so, we have a place for you. The Schofield Barracks Teen Center now located in Kaala Community Activities Center, building 556, offers fun services designed especially for you. Call 655-0451.

Family Readiness Group Assistance – Army Community Service offers a new program. Five part-time Family Readiness Administrative Liaisons, or FRALs, have been hired to assist family readiness groups with newsletter production and battalion level Web pages on the Division Web site. FRALs can also assist with phone tree formats and resource information and referrals. FRGs are encouraged to use this new program. Contact 655-2734 for more information and to reach your assigned FRAL.

Blue Star Card Bowling Special – Blue Star Card holders can bowl for \$1 a game at Schofield Bowling Center every week-day until 5 p.m. (excluding federal holidays). Call 655-0573 for information.

Find Weekly Lunch Specials – Visit www.mwrarmyhawaii.com to find all the weekly lunch specials for all Army Bowling Centers, Golf Courses and Community Clubs. Can't decide where to eat? Just visit MWR online.

HACN TV2 Schedule		October 15-21	
Morning		Evening	
6:00	Sign on	6:00	Voting 04' Assist Program
6:30	Fit for Life	6:03	Community Focus
7:00	Bulletin Board	6:13	Living History Day
7:30	SHAMU- Wild Babies	6:15	Bulletin Board
7:55	PAMS Report 2004	6:47	Arm Values Respect
8:00	Pentagon Channel	6:53	OIF Photo Montage 3
9:00	Pentagon Channel	7:00	NFL-Tight on the Spiral
10:00	ASAP-Fitness For Duty	8:00	OEF Deployment Ceremony
10:30	OIF Photo Montage 7	8:30	OEF Deployment Luau
10:46	Bulletin Board	8:50	History of JAG
11:30	Hawaii Hidden Beauty, Danger	9:00	Anti Terrorism FP
11:50	OIF Photo Montage 6	9:30	Oakland Army Base
12:00	Pentagon Channel	10:00	Youth Protection
		11:00	NFL-'58 Championship Game
		12:12	Bulletin Board
Afternoon		Overnight	
2:02	Hurricane Safety	12:46	Pentagon Channel
2:21	Voting 04' Assist program		
2:28	OIF Photo Montage 2		
2:23	PAMS report 2004		
2:30	SHAMU-The Manatee		
3:00	SHAMU-The Sea Turtle		
3:40	OAHU-Aloha Begins		
3:50	OIF Photo Montage 5		
4:00	Pentagon Channel		

ACS offers reunion programs for families

By Eileen Godinez
Director, Army Community Service

Reunion is a word that conjures up a mix of emotions. For most of us the thought of being reunited with our Soldier brings excitement and relief. It means the wait is over and we can finally be together again as a family or couple.

Can you shout Hallelujah? For some however, it may stir up some unwanted or confusing feelings like anger, anxiety or worry. Whatever thoughts or emotions you have about reunion are unique and important to you and your family so don't overlook, downplay them or tuck them away.

Talking about the reunion process and the array of thoughts and feelings that come with it is the first step in the journey to making it the best part of deployment.

Army Community Service understands the importance of the reunion process and has put together some unique and exciting programs and initiatives that will be helpful in getting you on the right track to making the homecoming a happy and memorable time.

In early November, ACS will be mailing every spouse a Reunion DVD. The DVD is intended to kick start your reunion



process by getting you to think about the issues and topics associated with the reunion process. The DVD contains three videos that address reunion.

The first video talks about the five key topics you and your spouse need to be aware of when you reunite. For example, forgetting your fantasies and letting things happen naturally is an important tip when reestablishing intimacy in your relationship.

Don't expect things to be exactly the way they were before the separation. Let's face it, you and your spouse have been through a lot in the past year and change is perhaps the one certainty you can count on, so don't fight it.

Understand the changes that have occurred and make an effort to work through them. Accepting and sharing your feelings is key to communicating and understanding one another. The more willing you are to accept and share, the more willing your spouse and children may be to doing the same.

The second video in the DVD focuses on children and the issues they face when the absent parent returns home.

Children will react differently depending on their age, their maturity level and how well they understand why mom or dad had to go away. It will take a family effort to help children make the transition.

The last video addresses the resources that are available to Soldiers and families.

Not everyone's adjustment process is a smooth one and you may find yourself seeking additional assistance to get over the hump. It is perfectly okay to seek help. There are many resources in our community to assist you and your family, so don't hesitate to use them.

Some of the resources include: the Marriage and Family Therapy Center at 433-8550; Child and Adolescent Psychology at 433-6418; Family Life Chaplain at 655-9460; or Army Community Service at 655-2400, to name a few.

The "reunion train" is full speed ahead and it is not on autopilot. The direction it takes will depend on you taking control of the gears and understanding the bends in the road ahead.

Stay tuned for weekly articles addressing the issues and topics surrounding the reunion process. For more information on upcoming reunion programs contact Army Community Service at 655-2400.

Classes Prepare Spouses for Reunion:

- Oct. 21, 9 – 10 a.m., Deployment Debt Freedom
- Oct. 21, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m., Don't Get Scammed
- Oct. 27, 7 - 8:30 p.m. Children and Reunion by Dr. Michael Faran, chief, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, will address the challenges children face when reuniting with their deployed parent. The lectures series will be held at the Nehelani Club, Schofield Barracks and child care is available by calling 655-3929.
- Oct. 28, 9 – 10 a.m., My Pay
- Oct. 28, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. Credit Sense
- Tuesdays Oct. 19, Nov. 16 and Dec. 21, 8:30 – 9 a.m., Financial Readiness, Buy Smart Tour – learn how to find discounts and daily savings in the commissary, Schofield Barracks.
- Tuesdays, Oct. 19, Nov. 16 and Dec. 21 at the Deployment Town Hall Meetings at Sgt. Smith Theater, Schofield Barracks.
- Nov. 10, 7 – 8:30 p.m., Soldier's Mental State: Effects of Deployment, by Dr. Peyton Hurt, assistant chief, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry will focus on the psychological impact of deployment and reunion for Soldiers and their families, The lectures series will be held at the Nehelani Club, Schofield Barracks and child care is available by calling 655-3929.

Spouse's Night Out, ACS building 2091, Thursdays 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

- Oct. 21, Oct. 28, Attitudinal Healing (two remaining sessions)
- Oct. 21, Maintaining Long Distance Relationships
- Oct. 28, How to Prepare for Reunion

Commentary: Ever had a “that’s my man!” moment?

By Sarah Burdan
FRG Leader, 411th Eng. Bn.

I love “that’s my man” moments.

You know those moments ... when you look around to see if anyone noticed. When you stand a little taller and take his arm.

They make me burst with pride and I want to run circles around everyone screaming, “My man! Yeah, that is my man.”

“Hmm, what? Yes, he is my husband...”

“Well, thank you I think so too...”

Are you laughing? Even if you don't admit it, you can relate. Especially, the first time you saw him in DCU's. There is something about a uniform ... it must be the masculinity.

Or, maybe it's how well he plays with the kids.

Or, how he jumped to your defense.

Or, how he came and rescued you when you got a flat tire or ditched the car again.

Or, when he charmed all

the girls.

Or spoke up for injustice...

Or how well he soldiers. When I last checked the 411th Web site I had a “that’s my man” moment. I was in shock when I saw a picture of my husband treating a little girl. Whoever took that picture – thank you so much.

(I was about ready to ream him for not sending me any pictures.)

That is the sort of stuff that needs to be on the

news! Just in case somebody doesn't know... Sgt. David Michael Burdan, HSC medic is my husband and I am very proud of that fact.

I just wanted to encourage you to tell your Soldier about your “that’s my man” memories. I wanted to encourage you to remember them and to love them.

Brag about him and talk about him. I will listen. I would love to hear about them. In fact, I think I will write a book with a bunch of “that’s my man” moments. You should all type yours or call and tell me. I will put them together and we can give them to our husbands when they get home.

“That’s my man” moments make me laugh, smile and glow. Hang on to that feeling, hang on to those memories and praise him. He is your man; make sure he knows it!

If you would like to contact Sarah you can reach her by emailing sburdan@411engineers.us.



Spc. Charles Hayes

Firemen work as a team to extinguish flames on a mock airplane at the annual Fire Prevention and Safety Stand Down Day held Oct. 6 on Sills Field at Schofield Barracks.

Fire Safety Day informs Soldiers

By Spc. Charles Hayes
Staff Writer

The Federal Fire Department held its annual fire prevention presentation on Sills Field at Schofield Barracks Oct. 6.

“Every year, one week is designated as fire prevention week. We try to target one Army base to do a presentation one day out of that week to promote fire safety and awareness,” said Kalani Whitford, a fire inspector for the

federal fire department.

Whitford said, “We want to promote fire safety and awareness with the children and Soldiers. It’s important to know what to do in case you encounter a fire. Today we are going to explain the importance of fire safety and demonstrate the proper way to use a fire extinguisher.”

“Over 90 percent of all people will encounter fire at some point in their lifetime,” said Victor M. Flint, a fire inspector and investi-

gator with the department.

“We need to know who to call and how to react if we are ever put in that situation. If you ever encounter a fire, you need to call 911.”

Flint went on to tell the audience about the importance of checking and replacing the batteries in your smoke and fire alarms at home. He even had three children from the crowd demonstrate the proper “stop-drop-and roll” technique.

Entertainment included a petting zoo, three bouncers for the children to play in, and fire engines on display for spectators to walk around and look at. There was even a mini arcade set up. AAFES, Sprint, T-Mobile, and many other sponsors teamed up with the fire department and had vendors come out with free food, drinks, and candy.

The big finale was a mock airplane in the center of Sills Field that the fire department used to

demonstrate how they would put out a fuselage or engine fire.

“We use a truck with a 200 gallon propane tank to feed burners inside the plane and an automatic igniter to start the fire. Then we have firemen come in to extinguish the fire. Of course, the sirens are on for the kids,” said Whitford.

(Editor’s Note: For more information about fire safety, call the federal fire department at 474-7786.)

Americans underestimate their risk of fire

Fire Prevention Week survey finds 3,925 died in fires in 2003 – many more than in all natural disasters combined

National Fire Prevention Association Release

Americans underestimate their risk of fire, a new survey from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has found. Choosing from a list of disasters, 31 percent of those surveyed said they felt most at risk for tornado, while only 27 percent named fire as the highest risk.

But among all those disasters, fires are actually more common – and many times more deadly. Fire departments responded to 1.6 million fires in the United States in 2003. While tornadoes average 70 deaths a year, fires killed 3,925 people in 2003, most of them in the home.

Fires also cause significant property damage, especially when compared with other disasters. In recent years, property damage from tornadoes averaged just over \$1 billion and from hurricanes just under \$3 billion. But the cost of fire damage? More than \$12 billion in 2003, up 19 percent from

the previous year, due primarily to the \$2 billion in losses in the southern California wildfires.

NFPA commissioned the survey on fire preparedness on the eve of its annual Fire Prevention Week (FPW), which starts Oct. 3. This year’s theme is “It’s Fire Prevention Week: Test Your Smoke Alarms.” FPW emphasizes testing smoke alarms because most people do not test as often as they should and as a result one out of five home smoke alarms is not working. To conduct the survey, Harris Interactive questioned a representative sampling of 1,014 adults by telephone from Sept. 9 to 12.

Asked which kind of disaster they feel most prepared for, the highest percentage of respondents (31 percent) said they felt most prepared for fire. Their answers to other survey questions suggest they are prepared – but not prepared enough. Ninety-six percent have smoke alarms, a new high for the nation. But only one-fourth have developed and rehearsed a plan for escaping their home in a

fire, a goal of public education efforts such as FPW.

The survey also points to other challenges. Small communities, poorer households and less educated households had lower rates of smoke alarm ownership. Only 8 percent of people whose smoke alarms went off responded as recommended – assuming there was a fire and leaving the house immediately. If most people have not practiced escape and do not react to fire by immediately starting to escape, then many will not escape in time.

“Fire remains a major cause of death, injury and property damage in this country,” said NFPA President James M. Shannon. “We can prevent many of these losses. It’s not enough to have a smoke alarm. You should make sure it’s working and you should be prepared to get outside fast if it sounds.”

According to NFPA’s recent report, Fire Loss in the United States During 2003, fire occurs in a structure an average of once every 61 seconds. A civilian is injured in a fire every 29



Spc. Charles Hayes

Displayed are a few of the many different types of fire extinguishers. Each one is filled with a different chemical and used to put out certain types of fires. Fire inspectors recommend that each home have a fully functional extinguisher and that each family member knows how to operate it.

minutes, and dies in one every 134 minutes. And four out of five fatal fires occur in the place where people feel most safe: the home.

Deaths from fire overall have been declining steadily over the past two decades.

In 2002, fire deaths dropped sharply. In 2003, the death rate returned to previous levels, jumping 16 percent overall and 18 percent for deaths from fires in the home, according to the report.

(Editor’s Note: NFPA has been providing fire, electrical, building, and life safety to the public since 1896. Visit www.nfpa.org/education/index.asp for more fire safety tips.)

A 30-year journey

By Spc. Daniel P. Kelly
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – As a 2nd Lt., Chuck Cardinal was frustrated with his platoon, but the struggles he overcame 30 years ago, have shaped him into the leader he's become today.

"I had a platoon that was not particularly strong," Cardinal said. "I used what I knew about leadership with these Soldiers, and I didn't feel that I was making much progress. It was very frustrating."

Then on Aug. 18, 1976 something happened that would change Cardinal's outlook on the Army for the rest of his career.

A party of nine South Koreans, accompanied by two U.S. officers and four American military police, ventured into the de-militarized zone to prune a poplar tree. They'd decided that the tree obstructed a clear view between two U.N. checkpoints.

At first, the North Koreans didn't seem bothered by the intentions of the tree-cutting crew. Then the North Korean lieutenant demanded the party halt its work.

When he was refused, a truckload of North Korean reinforcements showed up. The incident quickly turned into a bloody conflict, resulting in two American Soldiers being beaten then axed to death.

Cardinal was about 500 yards away at his outpost watching. He would have to pull his platoon together to make it through.

"We went to double, triple super alert, and we were right in the middle of the de-militarized zone. I kept thinking, if anything gets started, we're going to get run over ... we're just an infantry platoon," Cardinal said.

"We got ready to fight. That platoon, that had been so sorry ... like a soup sandwich, but in the face of adversity and looking in the face of the enemy, I watched the platoon come together and get a sense of purpose, team and unity that was incredibly uplifting. It was on that night, after watching all that had happened, that I fell in love with the American Soldier. It's been a love affair for almost 30 years.

After 30 years of service in the Army, Col. Chuck "The Bull" Cardinal is retiring. Cardinal serves as the Combined Joint Task Force 76 chief of staff here, and is the 25th Infantry Division (Light) chief of staff.

Cardinal started his journey on



Courtesy Photo/

(From left) Lt. Col. Daniel Georgi, Col. Chuck Cardinal and Lt. Col. Don Degidio help out in a kitchen in Afghanistan. Cardinal plans to retire later this year after 30 years of service in the Army. He is currently the CJTF-76 chief of staff and holds the same position for the 25th ID (L).

July 1, 1971 when he began college at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y. Recruited from his hometown in San Jose, Calif. to play for West Point's Black Knights, Cardinal earned the nickname "The Bull."

As large of a man as Cardinal is, one could say the position of defensive lineman is the perfect position. But Cardinal says his eyesight was a slight problem.

"I was very near-sighted, but I've had my eyes fixed," he said. Cardinal added he didn't wear glasses when he played, and that sometimes things got confusing.

"As a defensive lineman, half the time I'd tackle the wrong person because I couldn't tell who had the ball, so I'd crush the guy who was getting a fake hand-off," he said. "My buddies called me The Bull."

"Football meant a lot to me," he said. "It taught me a lot. I always tell people my foundation of character, to tell what's right and wrong, trying to stick with it and never give up, all came from football coaches."

Through his experienced leadership in the Army, Cardinal said the Army has changed for the better.

"The biggest things that changed is the quality of the Army," he said. "The Army that I entered into when I went to West

Point was an Army that was still fighting in Vietnam. It was an Army that had a rough time in Vietnam, because it was not very supported by the nation and there was a shortage of competent leaders and Soldiers that cared," Cardinal said. "The Army was broken, and broken bad."

Cardinal's first assignment after West Point was in South Korea as an Infantry platoon leader. Here, Cardinal experienced first-hand the difficulties in leadership.

"That experience is probably what has shaped me more than anything else," he said. "It probably kept me in the Army ... to see the fruits of my labor and the goodness of the American Soldier come up before my very eyes ... that's what's kept me going."

Cardinal will continue to serve his country as a civilian working as the Standing Joint Task Force Pacific chief of staff stationed at Ford Island, Hawaii.

"There's nothing I feel more strongly about than my commitment to my wife and my country, than what our Division is all about. It's been hugely uplifting for me to participate in this," Cardinal said. "It's all about the journey. What's special about the journey are the people you got to ride with ... it's what really makes it special."

Getting a degree on Uncle Sam's tab



Sgt. James R. Randazzo

Sgt. 1st Class Steven Hebrank reads from a book in preparation for one of the classes that lead to an associate degree this year.

By Marsha D. Wellein
9th RSC Education Services

He never expected to earn an associate degree when he arrived at the 9th Regional Readiness Command, Fort Shafter Flats, in Honolulu, Hawaii three years ago. But he got it after successfully completing an English proficiency exam and only two courses.

Sgt. 1st Class Steven R. Hebrank had a bumpy road to travel. He dropped out of high school at age 16, while in the 10th grade, and completed a GED while in the New Mexico Job Corps and joined the Army soon afterwards.

"I was in a local Houston store one day, and I saw a Soldier in his sharp looking uniform enter. This fellow seemed so confident and determined, and I ended up signing on the (Army's) dotted line," Hebrank said. "I felt directionless, unmotivated, and the Army gave me a sense of purpose, a real direction, and was, in fact, a type of surrogate father."

"I decided to attend North Harris County College in the fall of 1987, a two-year institution in Houston, and earned 22 semester hours while working part time," Hebrank explained. "I enjoyed the sense of accomplishment. And the Army accepted the credit."

By late 1988, Hebrank enrolled at the University of Houston, taking out federal student loans and grants, earned 70 semester hours, but still did not have a degree.

In January 1991, Hebrank was activated for Desert Storm.

"I really liked full-time Army life, the regularity of putting on a uniform every day, knowing that I was part of a team."

Although Hebrank served in the continental U.S., this experience, he explained, sure beat his regular job driving a limousine. He left the Army Reserve for a couple of years, but then enlisted again with the Reserve in 1994 and by the middle of 2001 was on his way to Hawaii.

"I was delighted to be sent to warm Hawaii, rather than to a cold country," Hebrank said. "But I wanted to return to college because I believe that education opens doors, helps in getting promoted ... and a degree would make my mom proud!" He said with a chuckle.

The education services officer helped Hebrank put his college credits together with military experience and service school and contact University of Phoenix.

"UOP has an Associate of Arts credit recognition program, without requiring residency, except for one writing course, through distance learning," Hebrank said.

"UOP evaluated me and told me that I only had to take one humanities and one written communications course for my associates degree, with all tuition costs paid for by the active duty education center. I recently completed both courses, and am just delighted."

Hebrank became the first 9th RRC Soldier to use the UOP Associate of Arts program. About 15 percent of the troops at the command are enrolled in a post-secondary program, with the Army picking up much of the tab.

The entire cost of the degree was \$255 out of pocket expenses, not including books.

"If I can do this, anyone can!" Hebrank exclaimed. He leaves Hawaii this year, and plans to obtain a bachelor's degree in business management or organizational leadership at his next duty station.

The UOP program is open to all military personnel, family members, and is excellent for those individuals who already have most if not all of the 60 semester hours needed for the degree.

Anyone interested in completing a degree should contact the closest military education advisor and then Julia Chandler, enrollment counselor, at (800) 800-7006 ext. 3564, by email at Julia.Chandler@phoenix.edu.

Nemechek's Army team wins in Kansas



By David Ferroni
Army News Service

KANSAS CITY, Kan. – A jubilant Joe Nemechek called it a dream weekend after he won the NASCAR Nextel Cup race Oct. 10 at Kansas Speedway.

The U.S. Army driver not only captured his fourth career Cup win, he also took the pole for the 400-mile event and won Saturday's Busch Series race in his NEMCO Motorsports entry.

Nemechek's Kansas City sweep concluded with a thrilling finish as he edged a hard-charging Ricky Rudd to the checkered flag by 0.081 seconds.

"There at the end (last lap) I was trying to save gas and here comes Ricky Rudd out of nowhere," said Nemechek, who led the final 37 laps of the 267-lap race. "I was like, 'Holy Moley.' I had to get back on it. He got beside me one time, but I wasn't going to let it happen."

And he didn't. Nemechek's tenacity and driving skills prevailed as his No. 01 U.S. Army and MB2 Chevrolet took that joyous ride to Victory Lane.

"Incredible!" shouted Nemechek. "This is something that every racer dreams of – winning both races (Cup and Busch) and getting the Bud Pole. It's a tribute to this entire U.S. Army and USG team. It's like a group of people working together for a common goal to have success with the same virtues that are part of the Army."

"I am so proud to represent the Army – I have the best sponsor in the garage. I want to thank all of the troops in the states and overseas. I hope we made them proud. I've always said that they (Soldiers) deserve to have their car in Victory Lane. Now we did it. This is really a cool experience for me to represent the Army."

It was a race in which military-sponsored cars took the top three places as Rudd's Air Force team came in second and Greg Biffle in the National Guard's car finished third.

The pivotal point of the race came when Nemechek's crew chief Ryan Pemberton made a calculated call by not electing to take a splash of fuel on Lap 209. While the leaders pitted to top off their fuel tanks, Nemechek moved from 12th to 4th and put himself in contention -- but with the possibility of running out of gas if the remainder of the race stayed green.

"We were right on the edge to make it the rest of the way," said Pemberton. "We told Joe to do the best he can to save fuel -- and he did. But a couple cautions came out later and that helped us. It was a tough decision, but I knew I had a driver who could do it. This was really a team effort. Not only did the over-the-wall guys do a super job on pits stops, but everyone on this team hit their marks. It was truly an Army of One victory."

With the fuel concern and the last lap duel with Rudd, Nemechek was asked in post-race interviews if he felt like he almost let this win get away.

"Well, there are a lot of would have's, could have's and should have's," explained Nemechek. "But I'm sitting here in the media center with the big trophy. Nobody can take that away from me."

And nobody did as the Banquet 400 trophy was safely packed in the team's transporter for the ride home to the MB2 Motorsports shop in Concord, N.C.

(Editor's note: See related article "Nemechek feels Army NASCAR team turning corner" on www4.army.mil/news/article.php?story=6440)

U.S. Army driver Joe Nemechek celebrates in Victory Lane after his NASCAR Nextel Cup victory Sunday at Kansas Speedway.

DoD photo

Lightning Spirit: *Pray for “confusion to the enemy”*

Chaplain (Maj.) Tom Russell
U.S. Army Garrison, Hawaii

Typically, raising a glass in a toast is an expression of honor. We toast the president, the Army, our unit, and our wives, to name just a few. But there's another toast – probably my favorite – that further unites us as comrades-in-arms: “Confusion to the enemy!”

I've even shouted out this toast, a time or two, with my water glass raised high. It often elicits chuckles or queried looks, but almost always a resounding, “Here, here!” from those who understand and agree.

Even better than a toast, this phrase is a great prayer. I'm sure commanders and warriors throughout the centuries have

prayed that their enemies would be confused on the battlefield. And, as thousands of us are once again learning first-hand, enemies on both sides of the forward edge of battle area are often very confused.

As a chaplain, I've prayed this prayer on numerous occasions, both privately and publicly. As a Soldier, I know that a confused enemy is a much more vulnerable enemy. Confusion is a combat multiplier for whichever side experiences the lesser of it. Indeed, we have entire units that specialize in psychological operations designed to confuse the enemy.

A quick Internet search didn't help determine the origin of this prayer or

toast. But a quick Bible search did shed some light on its use. The warrior-king David prayed the phrase, as recorded in Psalm 70: “May those who seek my life be put to shame and confusion . . .” (New International Version). David was one of the greatest warriors in recorded history. If the prayer, “confusion to the enemy!” was good enough for him then, I think it's good enough for us, now.

This may be the only occasion where confusion is a good thing. And most certainly, confusion is a very bad thing when we consider it from a spiritual perspective – as it applies to one's spiritual life. In responding to those who worship idols, God spoke

through the prophet Isaiah: “See, they are all false! Their deeds amount to nothing; their images are but wind and confusion.” (Isaiah 41:29, NIV).

Most who embrace a faith in God will agree, that without that faith, and a growing understanding and appreciation of how God works in one's life, confusion reigns.

In my “pre-Christian” days, my motto was that of Led Zeppelin rocker Robert Plant who sang: “Been dazed and confused for so long it's not true . . .” Thinking that my personal state of confusion was where most people lived, or came from, I was thrilled one day to learn that God has other intentions for life. After embracing the

Christian faith as a young Marine Corporal in 1974, life slowly began to make more and more sense.

To be sure, over the last thirty years, I've neither solved all the problems that I've faced, nor fully understood them. But, I'm at least able to live – and truly enjoy – each day without the spiritual, intellectual, and emotional numbness that confusion can often produce.

One of the most comforting truths about confusion and the life of faith is knowing where God stands on the issue. Writing to the Christians at the church in the city of Corinth, Paul proclaimed: “God is not the author of confusion but of peace . . .” (1 Corinthians 14.33a New King James

Version). Knowing that God doesn't create my confusion helps me to believe that it's not even His intention for my life.

Peace – that's what He wants me to experience. Most of you reading this column would surely agree, that we live in troubling and often confusing times. And many are no doubt experiencing a debilitating confusion. But be encouraged, life doesn't have to be lived that way.

You do not have to surrender your life to confusion. My prayer for you today, is that you are able to trade the confusion you may be experiencing for the peace that God wants to put in its place — the peace that comes only from knowing Him.

Foundation makes a difference for deployed troops

By Rafi Grant
Contributing Writer

The year 2004 marks a new chapter in military history on Oahu. Since mid-January a large part of the Hawaii-based troops have been ordered to deploy and have left the island for year-long deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq.

While the Soldiers are challenged by daily life on the front, the families left behind, face a changed daily life on the home front.

Greta Richardson, a realtor with Prudential Locations and active member of the Prudential Locations Foundation, a non-profit organization, is not personally affected by the deployment but, has a first-hand insight into the difficulties the Soldiers and fami-

lies experience during these difficult times.

Sandy Pena, a colleague and friend of Richardson, kissed her husband, Fred, goodbye earlier this year and has been sharing her experiences with Richardson.

The touching stories from Pena and other colleagues that are part of the military community were instrumental in the decision to initiate a project focusing on military families.

“We wanted to make a difference in the lives of the Soldiers and military families, explained Richardson. “My first idea was to send personal thank you cards to deployed Soldiers.”

However, with help from colleagues, a new and bigger idea was born – sending care packages to deployed Soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Insider information, provided by the family readiness group leader of Company C, 25th Aviation Regiment, Ginger Cofer, “was vital for me to decide which items would be most appreciated in the care packages,” Richardson said.

With the organizational tasks accomplished, volunteers and members of Prudential Locations Foundation met on a sunny afternoon to prepare the care packages, which included a variety of items from chapsticks, toothbrushes and shaving cream to noodle cups and hot and cold cereals. Moreover, “We included handwritten thank you cards to show the Soldiers how much we appreciate what they are doing out there,” said Richardson.

More than 250 packages were sent to Afghanistan and Iraq to

make a difference in the life of the Soldiers and to show them that “We are immensely grateful to the men and women in our military. Their commitment to protect our country is priceless,” concluded Richardson.

For more information about upcoming charity events, such as the “Make a Difference Day,” or for information about getting involved in serving the needs of children, families and the community contact Corinda Wong at corinda.wong@pruhawaii.com.

Jim Johnston, a real estate agent with Prudential, happily packs goodie bags for the Soldiers. Johnston also went shopping with co-workers to buy extra items.

Greta Richardson



Ramadan presents solemn, spiritual time

By Staff Sgt. Monica R. Garreau
17th Public Affairs Det.

— AFGHANISTAN —

The first day of the ninth lunar month signals the beginning of the “month of blessing,” the holiest time of the year for Muslims around the world. Ramadan, which begins today, is a time of prayer, fasting and charity.

And for service members deployed to the Muslim country of Afghanistan, it is important to understand and be sensitive to the significance of this observance, said Chaplain (Capt.) Tom Yates, Task Force Victory chaplain. This is especially crucial for those who interact with Afghans on a daily basis during patrols in local cities or when interacting with local workers and residents on and around the many bases across the country.

During Ramadan, Muslims obey a strict fast in which nothing will pass their lips from sunrise to sunset. Even water is off-limits.

This is significant to service members for two important reasons.

The first is that troops working closely with those observing the fast must pay closer attention to the fatigue and dehydration that often accompany the absence of food and water during the day, said Yates.

“In an environment like this, you have to be very, very careful,” he said.

The second, and probably most vital, reason is that non-Muslims must remain sensitive by not eating and drinking in front of those fasting.

“Don’t stop in the city

square and break out the MREs and have lunch,” said Yates. “In this case, you might not want to do that given the sensitivity that they’re not allowed to do that and you are ... tempting them.”

The month-long observance of Ramadan is in recognition of the period in which Allah first revealed the verses of the Quran to Muhammad, who was believed by Muslims to be the final prophet. The Quran is a holy book of prayers and teachings that is very strictly followed by Muslims the world over, including those in Afghanistan.

“We’re carrying on operations in an intensely religious nation,” said Yates. And remaining culturally sensitive “is important because it demonstrates the inclusiveness of the human family, and it acknowledges that we all have individual and personal religious preferences which we need to respect.”

Demonstrating support of religious preference shows people of all faiths that their religious devotion is respected, said Yates.

“We, in fact, more than just tolerate it, we support it,” he said.

But it’s not just local nationals of the Muslim faith who need support. There are numerous service members of Muslim faith, and they deserve as much respect and consideration as any one else.

“In the military, we have something called religious accommodation that says that a Muslim

Soldier cannot be forced to eat during Ramadan,” said Yates. “Commanders are required to grant religious accommodation unless there is a hindrance to the mission.”

Leaders should identify which Soldiers need this accommodation and plan accordingly, he said. Unit chaplains should also be advising commanders on the proper ways of ensuring their Soldiers have the opportunity to practice their faith, within the confines of mission accomplishment.

Although most Muslims will strictly follow the guidelines set forth during the month-long observance of Ramadan, Yates noted that some may not follow them as stringently. There are many who will simply more strictly observe the five daily calls to prayer. There are many reasons for the variation, such as employment restrictions, but the important thing is that they are afforded this opportunity.

“This 30-day period is a time of special focus or concentration on their faith,” said Yates. It is an opportunity for Muslims to worship and contemplate, taking the focus off their everyday lives and concerns.

Ramadan will conclude Nov. 14 with a celebratory feast and multiple charitable acts. And with coalition members providing the proper courtesy during this holy time, Muslims will also be celebrating their ability to practice their religion without hindrance.



Courtesy photo

Capt. Steven Richter fought a brain tumor to deploy to Iraq and re-assume command of Co. C, 225th FSB in September.

Commander fought brain tumor to deploy, rejoin troops

By Capt. Julia Bell
599th Transportation Group, SDDC SWA (FWD)

When 2nd Brigade Combat Team found out it would be deploying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Capt. Steven Richter, commander of Company C, 225th Forward Support Battalion went through the SRPC like everyone else.

The audiologist noticed a great difference between the hearing in his right ear compared with the hearing in his left ear, so she ordered him to get an MRI at Tripler Army Medical Center.

He thought to himself, there could not possibly be a problem; he had just run the Honolulu Marathon Dec. 14, 2003. He had no headaches, no loss of balance, no slurring of speech, just slight hearing loss.

After a second MRI, the doctors broke the bad news. Richter had a brain tumor. It was called an Acoustic Neuroma and many

times people die without knowing they have it.

How could this be happening? He asked himself. He had just completed his second Honolulu Marathon and was gearing up to deploy with his company. Several weeks passed before the decision and date were set for surgery.

Richter was taken out of command, his company deployed without him, but he told them, “I will be back.”

On Feb. 20, Richter was taken to Tripler for surgery. The doctors cut a golf ball sized hole in the left side of his head, directly behind the ear. Once the hole was cut, surgeons shifted his brain to reveal the tumor which was growing among the facial and hearing nerves.

During the 17-hour surgery, Richter lost the hearing in his left ear but, the doctors were able to preserve his facial nerve. The hours and days following surgery were grueling.

Richter also suffered two bed-

sores, the smaller on his right thigh, and the larger, more serious one, under his right arm. The second bed sore was muscle to bone deep.

After eight days in intensive care, he was allowed to return home. By day 11, he lost all muscle function on the left side of his face. He was unable to open his mouth, blink his eye or move his nose, for weeks and had to add eye drops to, and wear, a patch over his left eye.

Richter took long walks to get his endurance back and to help break-up the mass that was in his leg due to the bed sore. Within three months of surgery, Richter was running two miles in 13 minutes, doing push-ups and working on sit-ups.

In June, he scored more than 300 points on the Army Physical Fitness Test before deploying to Afghanistan for a month.

In September, Richter went to Iraq and reassumed command of Co. C and let everyone know, “the miracle has happened.”